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CONSTITUTION

OF THE

FEMALE SABBATH SCHOOL SOCIETY

OF THE

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH AND CONGREGATION, IN BOSTON.

BOSTON:
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B. M.
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PRELIMINARY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the number of Free Schools, and those attached to different religious denominations in this town, it is a lamentable fact, that vast numbers of the youth of both sexes are growing up, not only without religious instruction, but without education of any kind; who if neglected and suffered to remain ignorant of God, of a Saviour, and of their own hearts, and allowed to follow the bent of their corrupt inclinations, will not only ruin their own souls by their irreligious and vicious conduct, but by their example be the means of corrupting others. In some measure

to stop this growing evil, and trusting in that God, who has said, "Train up a child in the way he should go," and "who can have compassion on the ignorant, and those who are out of the way," a number of Ladies have formed themselves into a Society, and to carry their designs into effect, have adopted the following

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.

This Society shall be denominated the FEMALE SABBATH SCHOOL SOCIETY, of the Second Baptist Church and Congregation.

ARTICLE II.

This Society shall consist of Female Subscribers for the support of the School, one cent per week.

ARTICLE III.

The object of this Society shall be to select the most indigent and ignorant females, to teach them the first rudiments of useful learning, to impress on their minds the truths of religion, and see that they regularly attend public worship on the Lord's day.

ARTICLE IV.

The annual meetings of the Society shall be holden on the second Wednesday in April; and quarterly meetings on the second Wednesday in July, October, and January. At the annual meeting, the Society shall elect a First and Second Directress, an Assistant Directress, Treasurer, and Secretary, and six Managers, who shall constitute a Board, to conduct the concerns of the Society in the interim of meeting.

ARTICLE V.

The meetings shall be opened by prayer and closed by singing.

ARTICLE VI.

The First Directress shall preside at all meetings, preserve order, and call special meetings of the Society at the request of two of the managers; and of the Board, at the request of one, if she herself view it necessary; she shall exert herself to promote the object of the Institution, and hand in a report of her proceedings at the annual meetings. In her absence, those duties shall devolve on the second Directress.

ARTICLE VII.

The Secretary and Treasurer shall attend all meetings of the Society and Board. She shall

keep an account of the proceedings, receipts and disbursements, and collect and take charge of the funds; she shall pay no bills on account of the Society, until they have been examined, and signed by one of the Directresses.

ARTICLE VIII.

Those children whose parents are unable to render them decent to attend public worship, shall be provided with articles of clothing needful for that purpose on loan; a person shall be appointed as keeper of the wardrobe, to whom the clothes shall be sent for on Saturday afternoon, and returned on Monday morning.

ARTICLE IX.

It shall be the duty of the Managers to ascertain the circumstances of any who wish to attend the school, and report the same to the Directresses, who shall give information if they can be admitted, and order what provision shall be made for them; but the Directress shall be at liberty to admit scholars, when NO CLOTHING is to be provided, without consulting the Managers. The expenses shall be defrayed by the annual income of subscriptions and donations.

ARTICLE X.

The Directresses and one member of the Board, (appointed by the Society) shall be considered

a Committee, in unison with similar Committees from other Societies, for the purpose of conferring with each other, and recommending the best plans of Instruction and Government, and whatever may relate to the general good of the Societies.

ARTICLE XI.

Any alteration of this Constitution which shall be found necessary, may be made at any annual meeting by a majority present. From a conviction that much of the success of the *Sabbath School* will depend upon the regulations adopted for its government, the Society recommend the following

RULES.

1st. The object of this School shall be, the education and religious instruction of children, from four years, and adults who cannot procure those benefits during the week. If possible, the parents or friends should accompany the children on their admission.

2d. The business of the School shall be conducted by the first or second Directress, Assistant, and gratuitous teachers.

3d. The school shall (if practicable, without interruption) be opened by prayer and singing.

4th. Every scholar must come clean to school, and pay strict attention to the commands of the teacher.

RULES RELATING TO INSTRUCTION AND DISCIPLINE.

1st. The School shall be divided into such a number of Classes, as shall be thought expedient by the Directress and Teachers, according to their proficiency.—1st. Learning the Alphabet.—2d. Words of one syllable.—3d. Words of two syllables.—4th. Words of three syllables. 5th. Reading the Scriptures, and spelling indefinitely.

2d. The scholars shall first repeat the lessons appointed them the preceding week; after which the classes shall be employed in collective reading and spelling.

3d. The scholars shall be rewarded with tickets in the following manner:—For being at school at the time of opening an attendance, ticket for each time; six of which, shall entitle the possessor to a badge of Merit for punctual attendance. For good behaviour during divine service, or being promoted to a higher class, a good behaviour ticket; six of which shall entitle the possessor to a badge of Merit for good behaviour. Rewards to be given for the badges in suitable books.

4th. The scholars shall be subject to the following punishments :—For behaving disorderly at school, to forfeit *one* attendance ticket.—For similar conduct during divine service, *two* tickets. —For neglecting to bring their books, a ticket for each book ; every book that is lost, to be replaced or paid for, by a deduction from the rewards, its value to be estimated by the Directress.

5th.—When a scholar has been absent from school two Sabbaths without any reason being given, she shall be visited by the teacher of the Class to which she belongs, who is to report the cause of such absence to the Directress. This rule should be strictly adhered to, as it may prevent the scholars from breaking the sabbath, and when confined by illness, the teacher will have an opportunity of speaking to them on the concerns of their souls with much better effect than at any other time.

6th. Scholars continuing absent after having been visited several times, and no satisfactory reason assigned, shall be liable to exclusion ; any found guilty of lying, swearing, pilfering, or any other grossly improper conduct, and who will not after repeated reproofs, desist from such behaviour, shall be excluded and forfeit all the rewards she was entitled to at the time.

7th. Any child whose parents shall be found able to make suitable provision for her instruction, may be removed by order of the Directress, who shall present her a ticket certifying that she is honorably dismissed, and any one who is so far advanced in learning as no longer to need the instructions afforded by this institution, shall receive the same.

8th. No child shall be admitted from any other Sabbath School, without satisfactory reasons.

DUTIES OF THE DIRECTRESS,

To admit all scholars into the school, to examine them as to their proficiency, and to appoint them to Classes; to keep good order in the school; to keep a register wherein the names, residences, &c. of the scholars shall be regularly entered at their admission, to minute attendance of the teachers and number of scholars present, with any other circumstances which may occur.

DUTIES OF THE TEACHERS,

To mark the attendance of scholars on class lists, viz. those present at the opening of

the school with a P. those late with an L. and a blank left for the absentees, &c. to conduct the business of instruction according to the rules of the school, and by every possible mean to promote the religious improvement of the scholars; particularly, by putting questions from the reading lessons, which tend to make them understand what they read, and forcibly impress it on their minds; to preserve order and stillness among the scholars, especially by setting themselves an example of attention and diligence, and speaking in a low tone of voice.

To the teachers of the Sabbath School, we would recommend the plan of gratuitous teachers, the superiour advantages of which, have been fully proved by experience; but let it be observed, that those who voluntarily engage in this work and labour of love, should consider themselves bound by that engagement to a diligent and punctual attendance, the want of which will occasion very serious inconveniences to the school which they profess to serve. It will be evident to those who duly consider the subject, that frequent changes in the mode of instruction must be detrimental to the improvement of the children, and prevent their progress being properly ascertained; it is therefore of impor-

tance, that teachers be procured who will devote a considerable portion of their time to the work. When a sufficient number of teachers cannot be obtained, that deficiency may be supplied in some measure from among the scholars themselves; let a selection be made from those who are most advanced in learning, and who are equally remarkable for their good behaviour and orderly conduct; for too much attention cannot be paid to the latter qualification;—let those be employed in instructing the lower classes under the direction of the Directress as Teachers. It must be obvious to every thinking mind, that the existence of a Sunday School, depends materially upon diligent attention and punctuality; for so long as the teachers respect their engagements, it will continue and prosper; and in proportion as they decline, t will also decay; this is plain to any one who considers the subject. If there be no teachers to instruct, it cannot be expected there will long be scholars; if there be nobody to attend th e children to Public worship, they connot go, for here it should be considered, are no hirelings to supply deficiencies.

Let every one who neglects to attend in her turn carefully consider these few things—1st.

by so doing, she has betrayed the trust reposed in her.—2d. she has deranged the order of the school—3d. she has deprived a portion of the children of instruction which they would have had.—4th. she has set an example to her fellow labourers in the same work, which, if followed, must completely overturn the institution, and with it, all its good effects.

May the infinite Jehovah condescend to make these exertions instrumental of rectifying the morals of the rising generation, and of the salvation of immortal souls, and his will be the glory.

OFFICERS FOR THE CURRENT YEAR.

Miss MARY WEBB,	FIRST DIRECTRESS.
Mrs. MARY O'BRIEN,	SECOND DIREC.
Miss MARY VALLETT,	ASSISTANT DIREC.
Mrs. JOHN H. BOWES,	TREASURER AND SECRETARY.

MANAGERS.

Mrs. Elisha Williams,	Mrs. John Lambert,
Mrs. George Homer,	Mrs. Robert Fennelly,
Mrs. John F. Low,	Mrs. Lydia T. Cook.

FIRST REPORT

Of the Female Sabbath School, in the Second Baptist Church and Congregation.

On the opening of the Spring, we joyfully hail the recurrence of this periodical season, which brings us together as a Society. Although but a short time has elapsed since we united together, we have to acknowledge our obligations to the great Parent of good, for his gracious and merciful superintendance over us hitherto, and implore his benediction on our future proceedings.

The Sabbath School which derives its support from the patronage of this Society, was opened on the 21st of July, 1816; its commencement was propitious; heaven seemed to approve, and all nature to smile around us.* The little tribe of vagrants collected with much apparant cheerfulness, and we began our instructions with the fond hope, that some real good might result from them. Thirty-nine children were admitted the first day, and at various times since, to the number of forty-six, making in the whole, eighty-five; twenty-six of those have left the school, some in consequence of being placed in families, others have removed out of town; and one interesting little creature has died, which leaves the present number fifty-eight. As to their improvement, much cannot be expected in so short time; some, however, have done exceeding well, while others, have made slow progress; many of those children have

* It had been a season of extreme drought, and the weather very warm; but on the Saturday evening, a thunder cloud arose, which produced a plentiful shower; and the succeeding morning was peculiarly serene and delightful.

recently been admitted into the "School of Industry," and a few attend other schools, but a number of them have no advantages of learning except those derived from this Instisution; and perhaps not one in ten, of the whole, would regularly, if ever attend Public worship; some of them have their time so occupied during the week, either in begging from door to door, or in gathering chips to support a fire, that they perhaps seldom look into a book, except at the Sabbath school. This accounts for the little progress they make, yet we hope that little may be made a blessing to them.

With pleasure we can state, that much harmony has subsisted among the teachers; they have appeared to love one another better, in consequence of thus associating to serve the cause of benevolence. Although at first, the idea of continuing more than six weeks was a burden too great to be born, some have served more than six months, and do not yet appear to be weary.

The Utility of Sabbath Schools is a point no longer to be doubted. The little good which has already arisen from this, affords sufficient encouragement to believe, that with a Divine blessing they will prove a lasting benefit to many.

If we look for a moment into some of these abodes of wretchedness, we may see the mother of a numerous family, stretched on her tattered couch, in a state of death-like intoxication, while the discouraged Father has retreated from the scene, and left the helpless children to the gov-

ernment of each other, without a friendly hand to guide their movements. What an unspeakable favour to rescue them from this miserable situation, where a variety of other pernicious examples are before them; though but one day in seven to clothe them in neat habiliments, place them under the sound of the gospel, and beside a kind affectionate instructress, whose duty is not only to teach them to read the sacred Scriptures, but to tell them their condition as sinners, and direct them to the Lamb of God, as the only acceptable sacrifice for sin.

During the past winter, five of the parents of children belonging to this school have died; some of them, particularly the mothers, almost as miserable as poverty, intemperance and disease could render them. But while the most painful sensations are excited by a reflection on their unhappy situation, a brighter prospect presents itself on the part of their offspring; as we behold the hand of charity extended for their relief, and pointing them to the paths of virtue and religion; and we encourage the animating hope that the morals of the rising generation will assume a happier tone through the influence of this, and similar Institutions. But it is the blessing of Jehovah alone, that can render our efforts truly useful; to his fatherly care, then, would we commend this infant Society, beseeching him to direct all our energies into the grand channel of holy benevolence, and crown them with abundant success.

(Feb., 1891, 20,000)

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